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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8473
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0133
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0452
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0443
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0075
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0751

UNCLAS SAN JOSE 001322

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SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR WHA/CEN, EAP/CM AND IO/UNP, SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [XK](#) [CS](#)

SUBJECT: COSTA RICA: NEW CHINESE AMBASSADOR COMES CALLING

REF: A. SAN JOSE 1106 (ALL NOTAL)

[1](#)B. SAN JOSE 1173

[1](#)C. SAN JOSE 1254

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: New Chinese Ambassador-designate Wang Xiaoyuan has wasted little time in making the rounds in San Jose. Arriving in Costa Rica on June 13, he presented a copy of his credentials to FM Stagno on June 18 (although he has not yet presented his credentials to President Arias). In a courtesy call on the Ambassador on June 27, Wang downplayed the (fading) controversy stirred by the GOCR,s recognition of China. He said that trade would be high on the bilateral agenda, but not right away. Once his embassy was up and running, Wang expected consular services (for what he estimated were 50,000 Chinese in Costa Rica) would take up a good portion of his mission,s time. On global issues, Wang confirmed that the PRC favored Costa Rica,s election to a non-permanent seat on the UNSC and eventual APEC membership, but neither issue was solely up to China. While Wang is diplomatically cautious concerning prospects for China-Costa Rica trade, GOCR officials are quite optimistic, pointing to trade and investment fairs in both countries this fall and President Arias,s planned visit to China in October. Although familiar to some addressees, Wang,s bio is repeated in para 7 below for reference. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Wang downplayed the public and political controversy stirred by the GOCR,s announcement that it would recognize China (Ref A). He said the recognition initiative was not new; there had been on again-off again Chinese-Costa Rican dialogue for 15 years. Citing a proverb, he quipped that the PRC and the GOCR had reached agreement "when the melon was ripe." Wang nonetheless noted the importance to Beijing of recognition. Costa Rica was now the first Central American country to have diplomatic relations with China. The nearest others in the hemisphere, he added, were Mexico and Colombia.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Trade would be high on the bilateral agenda, according to Wang, but not right away. He was immediately preoccupied with finding a suitable building to house his new embassy and consulate. He anticipated that the (by his count) 50,000-member Chinese community in Costa Rica would place a high demand on consular services. (NOTE: GOCR immigration authorities estimate the Chinese community at only 10,000, Ref B.) Wang said that most of the Chinese colony worked in restaurants and small businesses. His embassy would at first be staffed by personnel rotating from

Mexico City. Eventually, Wang envisioned a staff of seven, not counting local hires. According to local media reports on July 5, Wang had settled on a house in the Rohrmoser area of San Jose for the new chancery, not far from President Arias's home. As for his own residence, Wang was still looking, while temporarily lodged in a local Ramada Inn.

¶4. (SBU) On global issues, Wang said the PRC "looked favorably" on Costa Rica's election to the UNSC and eventual entry into APEC, but neither issue was solely up to China (Ref C). In his first local interview, on June 24, Wang publicly confirmed China's support for Costa Rica in both the UNSC and APEC, but expected this support to be reciprocated when Chinese candidates sought election in international organizations.

¶5. (U) Wang may be diplomatically cautious in private about prospects for China-Costa Rica trade, but GOCR officials are quite optimistic in public. News stories on July 10, quoting Foreign Trade Minister Marco Vinicio Ruiz and the head of the PROCOMER trade promotion organization, Martin Zuniga, described a busy year ahead. Ruiz said there would be "an agenda of exchanges" including a visit by a PRC vice-minister in conjunction with a trade fair in August, Costa Rica participation in an investment fair in Shanghai in September, President Arias's visit to China in October, and a China-Latin America "business summit" in conjunction with the Ibero-American summit in Santiago in November. According to Ruiz and Zuniga, Costa Rican exporters hoped to target the so-called "new emperors" in China, the affluent, young globalized entrepreneurs and professionals who would be interested in value-added niche products such as processed food, bottled beverages, palm oil derivatives, ornamental plants and gourmet coffee.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: As the Chinese-Costa Rican honeymoon begins, we wonder about expectation management. The PRC obviously places greater political import on recognition by Costa Rica. The Ticos (if their hype is believed) have very high economic hopes. This relationship may face a little turbulence as it unfolds. The self-effacing, Spanish-speaking, experienced Wang, however, seems an excellent choice to open relations, however. Diplomatic colleagues from other embassies, impressed by his language skills and his full schedule of courtesy calls, were waving his calling card around as though Wang were a celebrity.
END COMMENT.

¶7. (U) WANG XIAOYUAN CURRICULM VITAE (as provided to us by Wang):

Born: December 1954 in Henan Province. University graduate (NFI).

1975-78 Chinese Embassy, Mexico City

1978-80 Translation department, MFA, Beijing

1980-86 Third Secretary, Americas and Oceania Directorate, MFA, Beijing

1986-88 Second Secretary, Chinese Embassy, Havana

1989-93 Second Secretary, then First Secretary and sub-director, Latin America and Caribbean Directorate, MFA, Beijing

1993-96 First Secretary, Chinese Embassy. Madrid

1996-97 First Secretary and Director, Latin America and Caribbean Directorate, MFA, Beijing

1997-98 Vice Magistrate, Xushui District, Hebei Province

1998-2000 Counselor, Latin America and Caribbean Directorate, MFA, Beijing

2000-2006 Consul General, Rio de Janeiro

2006-2007 Ambassador to Uruguay

2007- Ambassador to Costa Rica

Wang is married, with one university-age daughter who is studying in Europe.

HENIFIN